

## 2026 Photojournalism Interclub Scoring Guide.

### Image Creation and Authorship:

- All submitted images must be entirely the photographer's original work, including post-processing, with every pictorial element captured by the submitting photographer. Images must not incorporate or present other artists' work as the photographer's own, in whole or in part (clip art, stock images, replacement skies, photos of others' artwork,
- AI generated content, etc). The term author refers to the person who is the original creator of a submitted image; photographers may own the rights to use purchased content; however, authorship requires that all visual elements in the submitted photograph be personally created by the photographer.
- Photographers must retain copyright ownership of all visual elements contained within any submitted image, including composites. A violation of this rule constitutes plagiarism, a serious PSA ethics offense.

### Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI):

- Permitted AI-enhanced editing includes editing tools that perform transformations, enhancements, or corrections based exclusively on the existing pixel data captured in the author's original photograph without introducing externally sourced content.
- Prohibited AI editing: includes any AI-assisted processes for synthetic image generation that incorporate external image data, visual elements, textures, objects, or scenes not originally present in the author's photograph are prohibited.

### Statement on Subject Matter

- PSA's fundamental rule prioritizes animal welfare over photography, prohibiting baiting with live creatures, nest disturbance, endangering subjects, or depicting feeding of live prey to captive animals. Aerial photography must not disturb individuals or animals and must comply with local regulations.
- The images must comply with the division definitions listed on the PSA website; images that do not comply will be disqualified by the judges.
- While subject matter is not restricted, please be conscious of religious and civic sensibilities when submitting to Interclub, especially nudes

### Similar Image

- Identical or similar Images shall not be allowed in the same Division Competition or the same competition Season. Similar images are those which are practically equivalent, as defined on this page: <https://psa-services.org/pdf/Practical-Equivalence.pdf> . "similar images may be entered in different Competition".

### **Two images are considered practical equivalents unless two of the following parameters vary between the images".**

- Noticeable change in camera position. Examples of a camera position change include high angle vs low angle, pan, or tracking shots, etc.
- Noticeable subject movement: a subject's movement may be slight (a head movement) but must be obvious. This parameter may also apply to inanimate subject matter (arrangement of subjects in a lightbox)
- Noticeable change of compositional or design elements: this includes a wide variety of possible changes, from lighting and lines to spaces and shapes

### Disqualification:

The following apply when an image is considered for disqualification:

- Any image designated as a DQ must be reviewed by all the judges with a majority agreement of DQ before the awards are chosen.
- The judges, via the Interclub Competition Division Director can request that the Interclub Rep ask the maker to submit an original, unaltered image. If the maker of the image does not comply within a week or reasonable time frame to the Competition Director, the Image will remain a DQ with a score of 0.
- The Interclub Competition Division Director must ensure the reason/s for the DQ decision is correctly listed on the score report. The entrants should, be given the opportunity to justify their submission
- If judges determine a score 1 is inappropriate, the image must be rescored before awards are chosen.
- If an image is discovered to be disqualified during the current competition season, that image will be scored 0 and image removed from the Slideshow.
- If an image is discovered to be disqualified in a previous competition season there can be no changes since all files are archived. However, the award image will be removed from the season's Slideshow.
- If the Interclub Division Competition Director believes that an entrant is guilty of cheating, plagiarism, or is on the PSA Penalty List, the PSA Interclub Director is directed by PSA Board to report this incident to the PSA Ethics board.

### Makeup Images:

- A Club can enter an entire round make-up for Round 1 or Round 2 if missed with up to 6 images by 6 different individuals. Individual Makeups are not allowed. A missed Round 3 cannot be made up.
- If a club enters fewer than 6 images, they are unable to makeup missed images in future rounds.
- If a club maker receives a DQ it may not be made-up in future rounds.
- Makeup Images are eligible to receive scores and awards as the regular submitted round images.
- Makeup image scores are added by the software to the round where they were submitted with the missed round showing no scores.

# Scoring Guide for Photojournalism Competition Juries

Review the 2023 Illustrated PJ Guide to the definition, and direct any inquiries to the PJD Exhibitions Standards Director, [pjd-esd@psa-photo.org](mailto:pjd-esd@psa-photo.org), or to the PJD Image Evaluator, [evaluator-photojournalism@psa-photo.org](mailto:evaluator-photojournalism@psa-photo.org)

*A photojournalism image tells a story, and it is intended to be a true record of the scene without interference by the photographer or anyone on his behalf, and without any manipulation that changes anything existing there at the time the image was captured. It must be either full color or full greyscale, and it may not include the name of the photographer, the title or any other text on the image. The story is more important than the pictorial aspects or technical qualities.*

**(NOTE: the score pertains to a 1-5 scoring range; use the alternate scores for a 1-9 range.)**

**Score 1:** If the image does not show any human influence, it is not appropriate for the PJ category. Any attempt to deceive the viewer that it depicts reality, such as a known set-up or obvious manipulation, is not eligible in PJ and should be scored 1. In the Human-Interest section, sports action is excluded and should be scored 1 **in that section**. Or if no people are included, the image should also be scored 1 **in that section**.

**Score 2 (alt 2-3-4):** The image, in your opinion, provides weak or confusing information. Irrelevant details could compete for dominance and obscure the story. The situation could appear to have been set up, due to the subjects acting in unison or dressed inappropriately for that activity, or various other reasons for such suspicion, without proof. Technical flaws, such as poor focus, over-saturation or extreme sharpening, are distracting enough to interfere with the message.

**Score 3 (alt 5-6-7):** Image complies with the Photojournalism definition. Although it is not exceptional, it tells a story without significant flaws, and it appears to have occurred spontaneously. Importance of the subject matter can compensate for compositional or technical inadequacy.

**Score 4 (alt 8):** Image complies with the definition and has immediate impact. The story is strong and the technical aspects are good. It is a solid image where the elements work well together and should be considered for an award.

**Score 5 (alt 9):** Image is among the best in the competition in your opinion and definitely deserves an award. It shows an unusual aspect of a situation, perhaps a telling facial expression, an unexpected moment or a unique viewpoint, thus producing an image that differs from those that are seen repeatedly. An outstanding story-telling image.

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**Notes to judges:** Use *all five* of the available scores to rate the images within a group; do not assign just two or three of those numbers to everything. (Alternate scores for a 1-9 system are shown as well.) When using a different scoring system, adjust the scores accordingly to use the entire range.

**DQ is reserved for serious and provable violations and needs to be explained to that entrant.** An image with questionable editing or suspected non-compliance regarding arrangement of the content by the maker or anyone on his behalf should be given a low score, not a DQ, without proof.

*effective June 1, 2023*